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ARI Research Note 90-25

**AD-A224 932**

# Family Factors and Retention: First Annual In Process Review

## Research Triangle Institute

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for

**Contracting Officer's Representative  
D. Bruce Bell**

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May 1990



**United States Army**  
**Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences**

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FAMILY FACTORS AND RETENTION: FIRST ANNUAL IN PROCESS REVIEW

CONTENTS

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	Page
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
POLICY QUESTIONS . . . . .	2
RESEARCH QUESTIONS . . . . .	3
CONCEPTUAL MODEL/FRAMEWORK . . . . .	4
ACTIVITIES TO DATE . . . . .	5
PRINCIPAL FINDINGS . . . . .	6
CURRENT KNOWLEDGE GAPS . . . . .	15
PLANNED ACTIVITIES TO ADDRESS KNOWLEDGE GAPS . . . . .	16
MAJOR PRODUCTS . . . . .	17
ANTICIPATED POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .	18
OUTSTANDING ISSUES REQUIRING ARI/ARMY INPUT. . . . .	19
REFERENCES . . . . .	21

## FAMILY FACTORS AND RETENTION: FIRST ANNUAL IN PROCESS REVIEW

### Introduction

The Army Family Research Program (AFRP) is a long-range program of integrated research activities designed to answer key policy questions about Army families and the Army mission. Mandated by the White Paper 1983: The Army Family (Chief of Staff, U.S. Army) and subsequently by The Army Family Action Plan I (Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, U.S. Army, 1984), the objective of the research is to support the Army Family Action Plan through research products that will (1) determine the demographic characteristics of Army families, (2) identify positive motivators and negative detractors to soldiers remaining in the Army, (3) develop pilot programs to improve family adaptation to Army life, and (4) increase operational readiness.

This report presents a series of briefing slides which document the progress of the research on family factors and retention during the first year of the research program. It consists of briefing slides on research issues, activities, findings during the first year, and concludes with research activities planned for the future.

## FAMILY FACTORS AND RETENTION

### POLICY QUESTIONS

- HOW CAN THE ARMY POSITIVELY INFLUENCE RETENTION DECISIONS IN SUPPORT OF OVERALL FORCE MANAGEMENT POLICY?
- HOW CAN THE ARMY RETAIN HIGH PERFORMING SOLDIERS WHO POSSESS CRITICAL SKILLS?
- HOW DO FAMILY POLICIES, PROGRAMS, AND PRACTICES AFFECT RETENTION DECISIONS?

## FAMILY FACTORS AND RETENTION

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- WHAT IS THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF VARIOUS FACTORS IN THE RETENTION DECISION?
- HOW ARE RETENTION DECISIONS ACTUALLY MADE?
- WHAT ARE SPECIFIC RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RETENTION BEHAVIOR AND FAMILY PROGRAM USE, SATISFACTION, AND QUALITY?
- ARE RETENTION DECISIONS IN ARMY RESERVES AND ARMY NATIONAL GUARD Affected BY SAME FACTORS AS THOSE IN ACTIVE ARMY?

## FAMILY FACTORS AND RETENTION

## CONCEPTUAL MODEL/FRAMEWORK

- OUTCOME RESEARCH GUIDED BY FAMILY ACOL
- PROCESS RESEARCH GUIDED BY STAGED DECISION MAKING MODEL
- RESEARCH STREAMS COMBINED IN OUT YEARS

## FAMILY FACTORS AND RETENTION

### ACTIVITIES TO DATE

- **DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES**
  - LITERATURE REVIEW
- SECONDARY DATA ANALYSES- EARLY PRODUCT REPORTS
  - FAMILY FACTORS AND RETENTION INTENTIONS
  - FAMILY STATUS AND RETENTION
  - ROTATION EXPERIENCE AND RETENTION
  - DUAL CAREER EXPERIENCE
  - FAMILY ACOL THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT
- SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS
  - FT. KNOX
  - FT. ORD
  - USAREUR
- **COMPLEMENTARY RESEARCH**
  - IRR TPU ATTRITEE PROJECT
  - TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO FT. BRAGG TRANSITION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

## FAMILY FACTORS AND RETENTION

### PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

- **LITERATURE REVIEW**

MAJOR DETERMINANTS: PAY AND BENEFITS, JOB SATISFACTION

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT, SPOUSE SUPPORT

LIMITED EFFECT OF PROGRAM AND COMMUNITY VARIABLES

DETERMINANTS VARY BY STAGE OF CAREER AND FAMILY LIFE COURSE

- **SECONDARY ANALYSES- IMPORTANT DETERMINANTS OF RETENTION INTENTION**

MARITAL STATUS

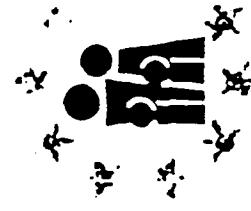
CURRENT JOB SATISFACTION

ENVIRONMENT FOR FAMILIES

LIMITED PROGRAM EFFECTS

## WHAT DOES 1985 DOD SURVEY TELL US ABOUT ARMY RETENTION?

- FAMILY AND FAMILY PROGRAM FACTORS
- MILITARY JOB AND CAREER FACTORS
- MILITARY ENVIRONMENT

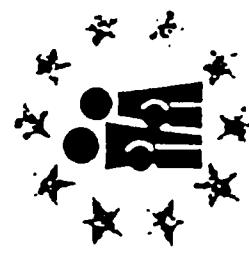
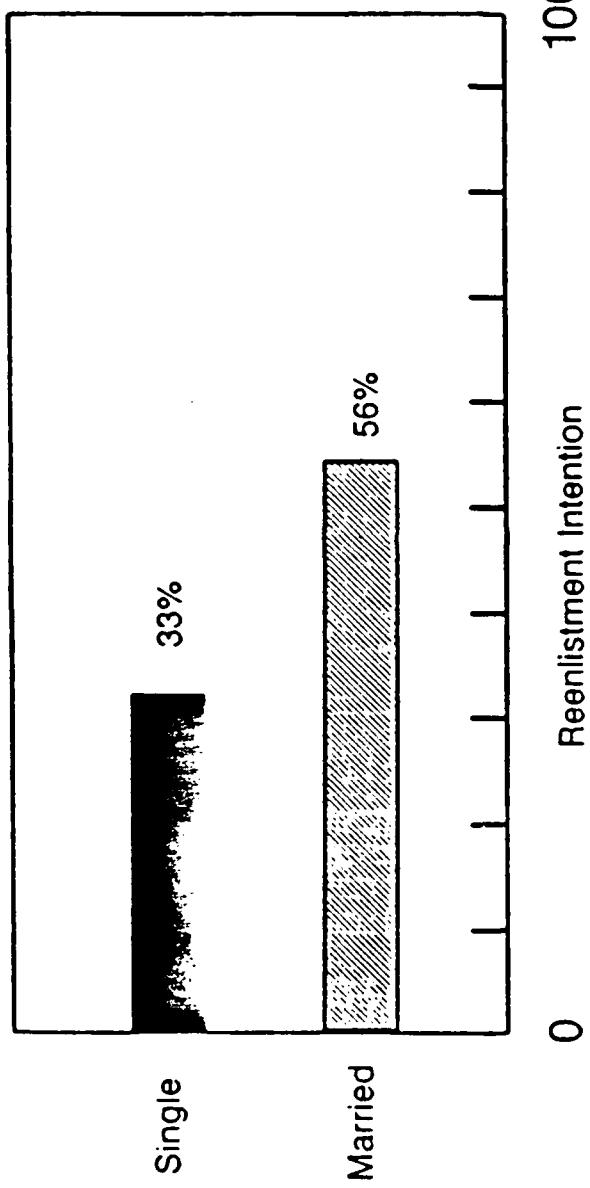


## VARIABLES USED IN THE ANALYSIS

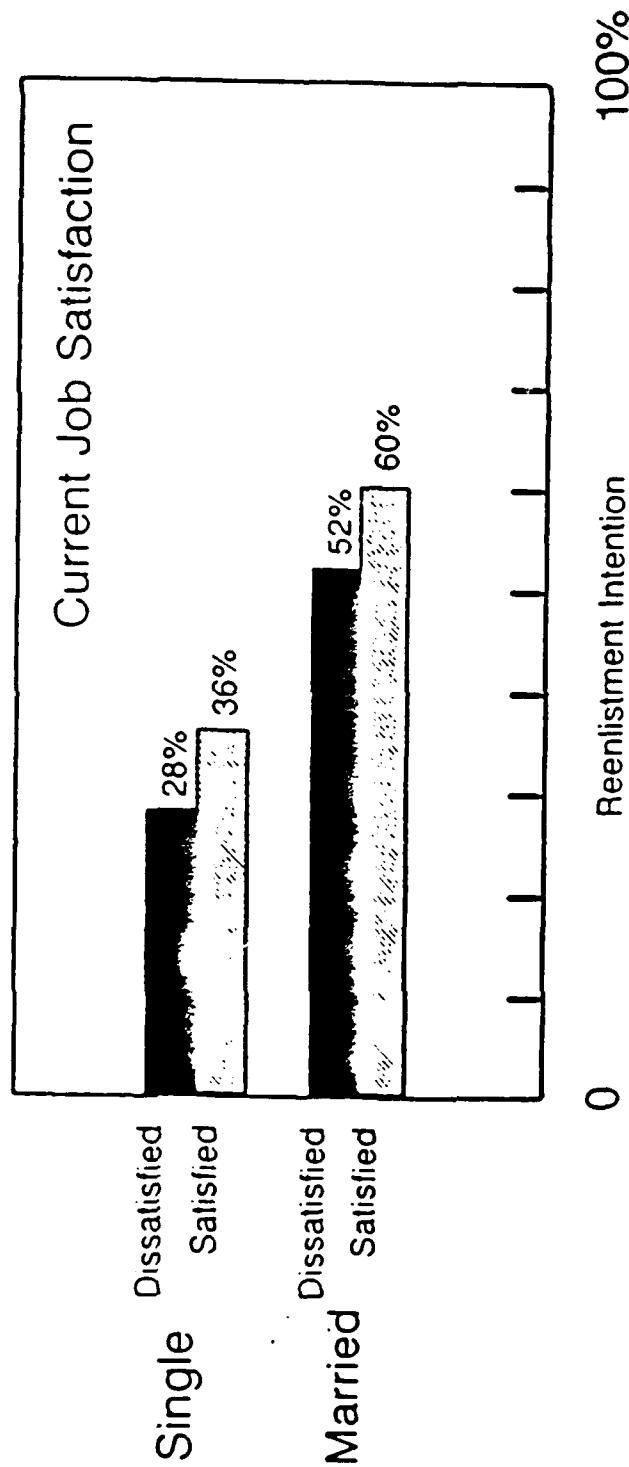
- INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY VARIABLES
  - CHILDREN
  - ENVIRONMENT FOR FAMILIES
  - RACE/ETHNICITY
  - SEX
- FAMILY PROGRAM VARIABLES
  - YOUTH/ADOLESCENT PROGRAM
  - CHILD CARE PROGRAM
  - RECREATION PROGRAM
- MILITARY JOB AND CAREER VARIABLES
  - ENLISTMENT TERM
  - PAYGRADE
  - CURRENT JOB SATISFACTION
  - PROMOTION OPPORTUNITIES
- MILITARY ENVIRONMENT VARIABLES
  - PERSONAL FREEDOM
  - OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE COUNTRY
  - LOCATION



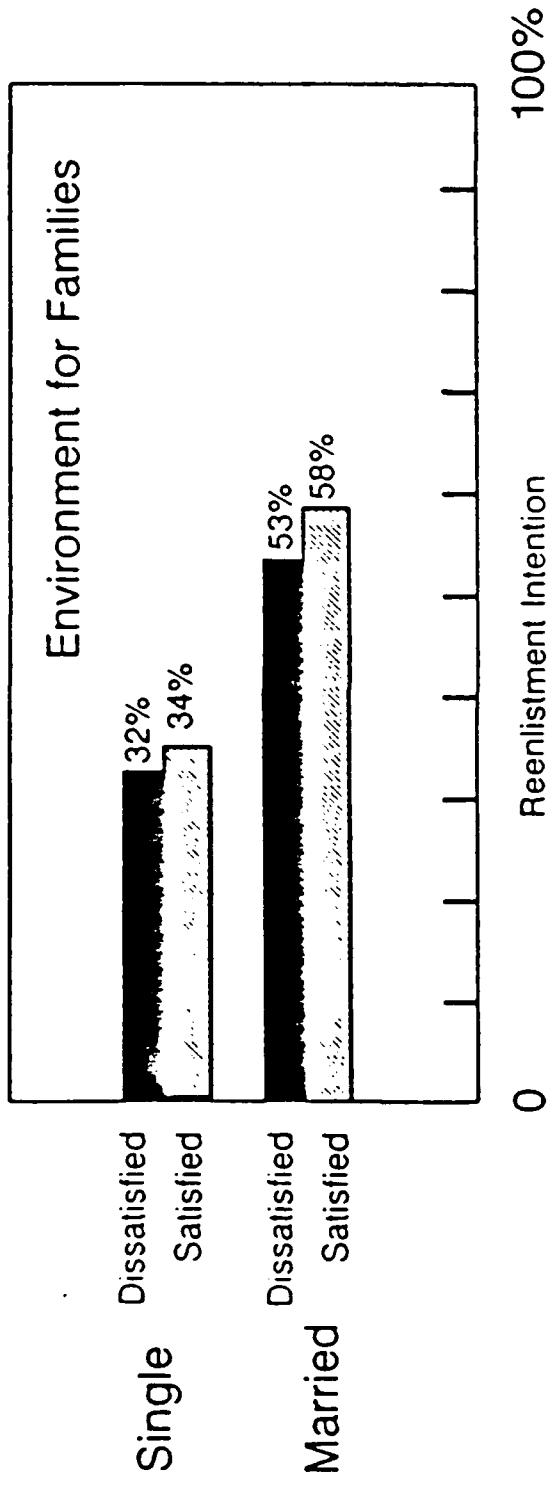
## WHAT IS EFFECT OF MARITAL STATUS ON REENLISTMENT INTENTION?



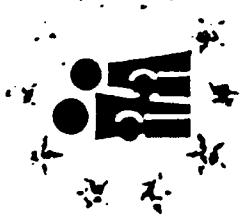
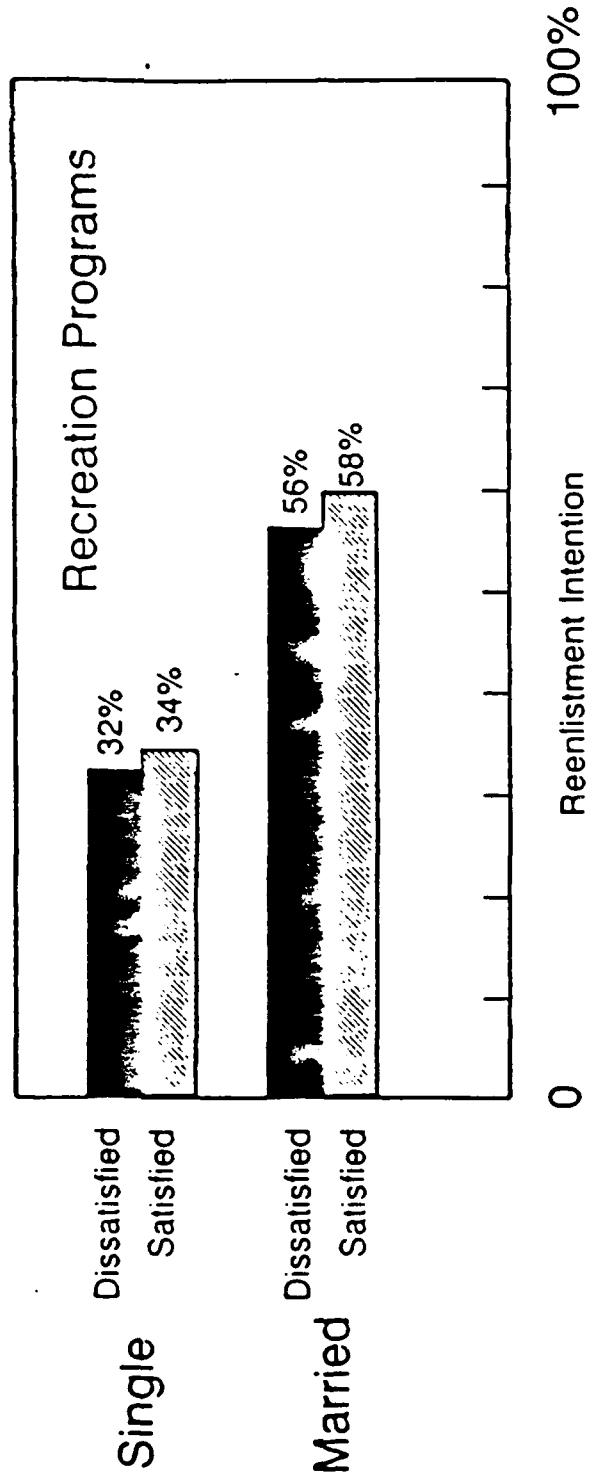
# HOW DOES MILITARY JOB AFFECT REENLISTMENT?



## HOW DO FAMILY - RELATED FACTORS AFFECT REENLISTMENT?



## HOW DOES SATISFACTION WITH FAMILY PROGRAMS AFFECT REENLISTMENT?



FAMILY FACTORS AND RETENTION

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS (PAGE 2)

- *FAMILY ACOL MODEL HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO INCLUDE:*
  - FAMILY AS DECISION MAKING UNIT
  - MEMBERS MILITARY PAY (RETIREMENT) AND ALTERNATIVE
  - CIVILIAN EARNINGS OPPORTUNITIES
  - EFFECTS OF MILITARY LIFE ON NON-MEMBER SPOUSE EARNINGS
  - NON-PECUNIARY FACTORS

## FAMILY FACTORS AND RETENTION

### PRINCIPAL FINDINGS (PAGE 3)

- **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

INITIAL IMPRESSIONS OF ARMY ARE IMPORTANT  
MANY RETENTION DECISIONS MADE PRIOR TO ETS-90  
REENLISTMENT NCOS RELY ON SPOUSE SUPPORT  
ENTRY THROUGH RESERVES OR NATIONAL GUARD MAY BE IMPORTANT  
OPPORTUNITY FOR POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON RETENTION DECISION  
VARIES WITH YEARS OF SERVICE  
FAMILY PROGRAMS ARE IMPORTANT FACTOR, ESPECIALLY HOUSING  
AND CHILD CARE  
SOLDIERS APPRECIATE REALISTIC INFORMATION TO HELP ASSURE  
THAT EXPERIENCE MATCHES EXPECTATION

## FAMILY FACTORS AND RETENTION

### CURRENT KNOWLEDGE GAPS

- RESTRICTION OF SECONDARY ANALYSES TO RETENTION INTENTIONS
- LIMITED MEASURES OF FAMILY PROGRAM AND COMMUNITY VARIABLES
- INCOMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHANGES IN FAMILY STATUS AND RETENTION DECISIONS
- INADEQUATE BASIS FOR ESTIMATING NON-MEMBER SPOUSE ALTERNATIVE EARNINGS
- INCOMPLETE TREATMENT OF ATTITUDINAL/AFFECTIVE VARIABLES IN ACOL FRAMEWORK
- LIMITED DEVELOPMENT OF STAGED DECISION MAKING PROCESS MODEL
- INCOMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF RETENTION DECISION PROCESS FOR MEMBERS AT VARIOUS STAGES IN FLC AND SCC
- LIMITED UNDERSTANDING OF ROLE OF UNIQUE FACTORS IN RETENTION DECISION PROCESS FOR MEMBERS IN KEY MOS GROUPS

FAMILY FACTORS AND RETENTION	PLANNED ACTIVITIES TO ADDRESS KNOWLEDGE GAPS
ACTIVITIES	TIME LINE
COMPLETE SECONDARY ANALYSIS WITH ACTUAL RETENTION BEHAVIOR	FY88/Q1-FY88/Q2
DEVELOP IMPROVED MEASURES OF FAMILY PROGRAM AND COMMUNITY VARIABLES	DEPENDENT ON FUNDING OF OPTION 1
EXTEND ACOL FRAMEWORK	FY88/Q1-FY88/Q2
- FAMILY LIFE CYCLE	
- ATTITUDINAL VARIABLES	
- TASK 4 RESULTS TO ESTIMATE SPOUSE EARNINGS	FY88/Q1-FY89/Q1
PREPARE QUESTIONS FOR SURVEY INSTRUMENT	FY88/Q1-FY89/Q1
REVIEW/REVISE MODEL OF COUPLE RETENTION DECISION	FY89/Q4-FY90/Q4
MAKING PROCESS	MAKING PROCESS
COLLECT INFORMATION (INTENSIVE INTERVIEWS) ON DECISION	SELECT KEY MOS GROUPS AND DEVELOP RESEARCH DESIGN FOR
ANALYZING THEIR RETENTION DECISION PROCESS	ANALYZING THEIR RETENTION DECISION PROCESS
REFINE DESIGN OF ETS RETENTION SURVEY	REFINE DESIGN OF ETS RETENTION SURVEY

FAMILY FACTORS AND RETENTION  
MAJOR PRODUCTS

PRODUCT	DELIVERY DATE	CONTENT	AUDIENCE
Early Product Reports	FY 87/Q4- FY 88/Q2	Results of literature reviews, secondary analyses, exploratory discussions	Summary of "what we know" to user community; preliminary hypotheses/ measures to project team
IRR TPU Attritee Report	FY 88/Q3	Analysis of factors affecting TPU attrition	DCSPER's USAR Personnel Research Strategy
TR 7: Policy/Program Report	FY 90/Q4	Relative importance of various Army family policies, programs, and practices in retention of soldiers	CFSC, DCSPER, other Army staff; refined hypotheses to project team
TR 8: Decision Making Report	FY 91/Q2	Description of Army family career decision making process	Installation-level reenlistment NCOs, USAREC, TRADOC schools
TR 9: Stayer/Leaver Report	FY 92/Q1	Demographic factors that differentiate stayers and leavers	DCSPER, CFSC, refined hypotheses for project team
TR 10: Modelling Report	FY 92/Q4	Results of empirical estimation of conceptual models that trace out the relationships between family and non-family variables related to soldier retention	DCSPER, CFSC

FAMILY FACTORS AND RETENTION		ANTICIPATED POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS	
TYPE OF RECOMMENDATION	AUDIENCE	SOURCE	
CHANGES IN FAMILY PROGRAM POLICIES AND PRACTICES	CFSC, MACOMs	TR7: POLICY/PROGRAM REPORT TR10: MODELLING REPORT	
CONGRUENCE OF RETENTION PRACTICES AND FORCE MANAGEMENT POLICY	CHIEF OF STAFF, DCSPER	TR9: STAYER/LEAVER REPORT TR10: MODELLING REPORT	
IMPROVEMENTS IN REENLISTMENT COUNSELING	REENLISTMENT NCOS, TRADOC SCHOOLS, COMMANDERS	TR8: DECISION MAKING REPORT	
EDUCATION/TRAINING OF REENLISTMENT NCOS	USAREC, MACOMs	TR8: DECISION MAKING REPORT	

## FAMILY FACTORS AND RETENTION

### OUTSTANDING ISSUES REQUIRING ARI/ARMY INPUT

- FORMATION OF ARMY STEERING COMMITTEE
- ACCESS TO FORCE MANAGEMENT POLICY PLANNING
- EXTENT OF INVOLVEMENT WITH TRANSITION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
- IDENTIFICATION OF KEY MOS GROUPS
- IDENTIFICATION OF RETENTION ISSUES FOR RESERVES

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